



On the Ground

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Inaugural Edition

Welcome to the inaugural edition of *On the Ground*, a bi-monthly publication for the Idaho Soil Conservation Commission to share ideas, information, and other items of interest with the local soil conservation districts and interested partners.

Each edition, we will share stories from the commissioners and staff members. We'll feature new grant opportunities, training opportunities, and other helpful information to take back to your districts. Conservation

in Action (page 4) will feature conservation practices currently in use by conservation districts in Idaho and around the country. If you have any suggestions for topics you would like to see in future editions, please contact Kristin Magruder at (208) 332-8650 or Kristin.Magruder@agri.idaho.gov.

This month, we say hello to new employees and goodbye to others (page 2). We give summary updates on the Interim Committee (page 6) and discuss Carbon Sequestration

and best practices for loss-prevention in employment practices (page 3).

We look forward to featuring best practices and making sure the Idaho's soil conservation districts stay informed about news and events at the Commission.



Idaho Watershed Initiative

The Idaho Watershed Initiative is a new grant offered by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game. The objective is to restore watersheds by providing healthy forest, shrub-steppe, and wetland landscapes, as well as improve water quality. Projects that will be consid-

ered for funding in FY2010 are restoration and improvement of forest landscapes, shrub-steppe landscapes, and wetland landscapes. The focus area is Southeastern and South-Central Idaho. If you are interested in this funding opportunity, the Request for Proposal will be announced by Novem-

ber 1, 2009, and applications will be due by December 15, 2009.

For more information, contact Don Kemner, Wildlife Program Coordinator
Idaho Fish & Game
208-287-2748
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J. Morgan Evans



Dick Bronson

Commissioner's Corner

Since 2002, it has been my privilege as a member of the Idaho Soil Conservation Commission, working side-by-side with the other commissioners, to meet with the local soil conservation districts, the Idaho Association of Soil Conservation Districts, legislators, and citizens from across the state to discuss the crucial conservation issues facing Idaho. Now, as we discuss these issues, we remain focused on our responsibility to promote conservation and wise use of our natural resources in Idaho. We have a tough assignment, however, the reality is that conservation issues and problems can not be solved unless all are ready

to "roll up their sleeves" and work together.

As a Commission, we would like to welcome our new commissioner, Dick Bronson, from Payette, Idaho and look forward to working with him. "Hats off!" to our hard-working staff and capable administrator, Sara Schmidt, who, during these tough financial times, is helping us reach our many goals, ensure program transparency, and further conservation in many venues.

The Commission believes that Idaho's soil, water, air, and renewable resources must be used in accordance with the needs of the people of the state while main-

taining a quality environment and productive economy. The solution to these important issues will take commitment and a tremendous effort, but one which will yield great rewards for our state.

Being good stewards of the land insures that our natural resources and healthy economy will continue well beyond our lifetime and our children's. May we continue to work toward this goal together as a powerful conservation coalition to accomplish this end for Idaho and it's people.

Submitted by J. Morgan Evans
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"The down side to retirement is having to drink coffee on your own time."

Author

Unknown

Goodbye and Good Luck

After 24 years of working for the Commission and a lifetime of conservation work, Biff Burleigh has finalized his retirement plans and his last day was Friday, October 30, 2009.

Biff, along with his wife, Pat, is

looking forward to working on their cabin in Cascade, spending more time with their kids and grandchildren, and doing whatever he wants when he darn well pleases.

Effective November 2, 2009, Lance Holloway will be the Acting Water Quality Program for Agriculture (WQPA) Program Manager. Biff has very efficiently and effectively

transferred as much institutional knowledge to ensure a smooth transition. Please contact Lance with any WQPA questions or requests.

Biff has been a pleasure to work with and will be sorely missed, but please join us in wishing him well as he enters the next phase of his life.

Hello and Welcome

The Commission is pleased to welcome some familiar faces as new temporary employees:

- Wayne Newbill, Boise, District Services and Support (part time), effective 9/14/09;
- Brian Reed, Idaho Falls, Water

Quality Resource Conservationist (part time), effective 9/21/09;

- Allen Bradbury, Wendy Koons and Quinton Snook, Salmon, federally funded Water Quality Resource Conservationists (full time), effective 10/19/09

Our goal is that these interim assignments will ensure the best

continued customer service possible to local conservation districts and to the overall conservation partnership.

And, by utilizing these talented individuals on a short term/part-time basis, it is fiscally responsible and within the approved budget confines of the SCC.

ON THE GROUND

Carbon Sequestration on Idaho Agriculture and Forest Lands

Carbon Sequestration marketing is bringing new conservation and economic opportunities to Idaho farmers, ranchers, and foresters. Conservation efforts that remove atmospheric greenhouse gases, including carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄), and nitrous oxide (N₂O), and sequester them in the soil will produce credits that can be sold in a new trading exchange. The Idaho Soil Conservation Commission (ISCC) is leading this effort on behalf of Idaho State landowners and operators.

You may already be using some of the conservation practices that can provide salable credits, or you may be thinking of making some cropping or land use changes. In either case, the annual sale of carbon credits may provide additional income for your operation, and also help the environment.

The ISCC, with the help of its Governor-appointed Carbon Sequestration Advisory Committee, has focused on five key components to further carbon trading in Idaho.

Carbon Trading Pilot Projects in Idaho

The Nez Perce Tribe is currently implementing Idaho's first forestry trade, aggregated through the National Carbon Offset

Coalition (NCOC), and marketed on the Chicago Climate Exchange (CCX). The Clearwater Resource Conservation and Development Council (RC&D) is working on an urban forestry carbon trading project with the cities of Moscow and Sandpoint. The High Country RC&D, the Three Rivers RC&D, along with several local conservation districts in Eastern Idaho, are currently involved with the ISCC in working with a number of ranchers to develop and implement a rangeland and grass-land pilot project. All of the above mentioned pilot trades have been aggregated through NCOC and marketed through the CCX.

The Pacific Northwest Direct Seed Association (PNDSA) and Idaho farmers are currently participating in cropland trades involving no till/direct seed and precision agriculture.

*Submitted by Michael Hoffman, ISCC
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For more information, visit our website:
<http://www.scc.idaho.gov/carbon%20sequestration%20main.htm>

Employment Practices Liability: Loss Prevention Checklist

Employment Practices Liability (EPL) insurance protects the districts against damage relating to their workforce such as wrongful terminations, harassment, discrimination, defamation, and unfair hiring or firing practices. By having clear and concise policies and procedures that clearly follow federal and state law, you can minimize your risk of legal action. This month features the hiring process and steps you can take to protect your district.

Hiring Process

- Require all applicants to complete and sign a standard application form

- Develop job descriptions that are concise and update on a regular basis
- Only ask job-related questions during the interview process, do not request personal information such as age, marital status, or race
- Exercise caution while checking references: defaming the applicant or releasing personal information are grounds for a lawsuit
- Provide a written offer of employment so the applicant clearly understands and there is no misrepresentation of terms of employment

Sources of EPL claims include invasion of privacy, breach of contract, discrimination, and defamation. The Idaho Com-

mission on Human Rights administers state and federal anti-discrimination laws in Idaho to protect persons from illegal discrimination and handles complaints under federal law deferred to them by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

For more information about laws protecting workers in Idaho, visit their website at <http://humanrights.idaho.gov/law.html>

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Conservation in Action: Lawyer Creek

The Lawyer Creek watershed is comprised of 137,000 acres that extend from the headwaters at 5,730 feet elevation to an elevation of 1,320 feet where it enters the Clearwater River near Kamiah, Idaho.

The watershed is split between Idaho and Lewis County. Lawyer Creek is listed on the Idaho 2002 Integrated §303(d)/§305(b) Report. Identified water quality issues in this watershed include: bacteria, nutrients, oil and grease, dissolved oxygen, sediment, water temperature, and ammonia.

Approximately 90% of the watershed is privately owned. Current projects in the Lawyer Creek Watershed are the Wa-

ter Quality Program for Agriculture (WQPA) and Snake River Basin Adjudication (SRBA) projects for both Idaho and Lewis County.

The four projects focus on increasing best management practice implementation to ameliorate the effects to fish habitat from dry land farming, livestock feeding and grazing, and poorly functioning riparian areas. Project implementations as of August 2009 have reached 28 landowners, 11,022 acres, 13,440 feet of stream, and 335 head of cattle with a total of 87 practice installations.

This project could not have happened without the coordi-

nated partnership between Idaho SWCD, Lewis SWCD, Idaho Soil Conservation Commission (ISCC), Office of Species Conservation (OSC), Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), and Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS).

Practice installations are detailed in the table below.

*Submitted by Eileen Rowan, ISCC Water Quality Resource Conservationist
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*“Conservation
is a state of
harmony
between men
and land.”
Aldo Leopold*

Idaho County		
Practice	Amount	Units
Access Road	2,000	feet
Diversion	175	feet
Fence	7,937	feet
Heavy Use Protection	6	pads
Nutrient Management	20	tests
Pipeline	3,283	feet
Pumping Plant for Water Control	1	pump
Residue Management, Direct Seed	996	acres
Residue Management, Mulch Till	303	acres
Roof Runoff Structure	1	structure
Spring Developments	2	springs
Stream Crossings	1	crossing
Structure for Water Control	110	feet
Water Well	1	well
Watering Facilities	8	troughs

Lewis County		
Practice	Amount	Units
Fence	4,370	feet
Nutrient Management	21	tests
Residue Management, Direct Seed	1,594	acres
Residue Management, Mulch Till	79	acres
Spring Development	1	spring
Watering Facility	1	trough

Conservation in Action: Lawyer Creek



Left: Fence, Access Road and Crossing installed Spring 2009 to exclude cattle from creek and riparian area improving bank stability and water quality.

Right: Riparian area with bank trampling from cattle, nutrients in water. Area will be fenced and off-site water developed Summer 2010.



Left: Tree planting in draw to slow run-off waters, collect sediments and utilize nutrients.

Interim Committee Update

Idaho Soil Conservation Commission

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Summary of Interim Committee

The 2009 Idaho Legislature created an Interim Committee to complete a study of the statutory provisions and applicable rules relating to the local conservation districts and the Soil Conservation Commission (SCC). The entire resolution can be viewed at <http://www.legislature.idaho.gov/legislation/2009/HCR025.pdf>.

The Interim Committee has met twice and the next meeting has yet to be announced. Complete details about interim committee members, agendas and minutes are available at <http://www.legislature.idaho.gov/sessioninfo/2009/interim/soil.htm>.

The Interim Committee has heard presentations from four local conservation districts, the Idaho Association of Soil Conservation Districts, the Soil Conservation Commission, and the Attorney General's office. There are currently two subcommittees looking at Structural and Financial items and ideas.

Some examples of what the Structural Subcommittee chaired by Sen. Stegner will consider are:

- Location of SCC in state government (i.e., within Agriculture or self governing?)
- How Commissioners are selected and appointed (i.e., geographically, with or without political affiliation, etc.)
- Structure of local districts (possible efficiencies, i.e., consolidation, etc.)

Some examples of what the Financial Subcommittee chaired by Rep. Roberts will consider are:

- District Allocations (amount of base funding, methodology to distribute remaining funds)
- *Proposals presented at the 9/23 meeting were emailed to all districts on 9/24*

- Role of SCC in oversight and accountability of districts

- Future rulemaking that might be needed
- The Interim Committee has asked for concrete ideas and encouraged the SCC to engage other partners in an effort to find consensus that might exist. The SCC Administrator and Commissioners have been attending district and division meetings and look forward to presenting the input from all partners to the Interim Committee.

The Conservation Partnership has been activated and recently met to discuss consensus about the location of SCC in state government, the name of SCC, the role of SCC, how Commissioners are selected and appointed, District allocations, and impact of financial audit and reviews.

For more information, please contact your local legislator or any ISCC Commissioner



WSU Delay 2010 RFA: Extension Risk Management Education Grants Program

The Washington State University Extension Office, Western Center for Risk Management Education (Western Center), announces a delay in the Request for Applications (RFA) for the Extension Risk Management Education Grants Program.

The RFA will not be released on November 2. We anticipate an official release date sometime in the second or third week of November. Depending upon the re-

lease date, the Pre-Proposal submission date may be subject to change. Any changes to the application submission timetable will be contained in the RFA and on the Western Center's website. Please do not hesitate to call us if you have any questions.

For more information, please contact Jo Ann Warner, Grants Specialist, 509-477-2168 or visit Western Center's website at <http://westrme.wsu.edu/>.

